THE SHIPWRECKERS

BY CHARLES FRANCIS BOURKE

ALL Barnegat blazed with excitement on the day of the big fair and lifeboat drill on the beach for the benefit of the Life Savers' Home, the first day of the Big Wind, when the Brignola wreck came to Barnegat Life Saving Station. That is, all save the life crew out on the beach across the bay.

At Ships Bottom, as the station is marked on the chart of every mariner on the coast, with an ominous black circle round it, the boom of the ocean sirocco that came growling out of the east at dawn brought disappointment and gloom to the hearts of the life savers. A glance at that tumbling ocean at daylight told them that there would be no showing off in the surf that day, with chances good for a drill in dead earnest before night, only in cork veskits instead of white ducks.

"It looks like Old Borry Trouble himself was working against us fellers, dustin' up his way," Long Johnson, the "preacher" of the crew, grumbled as he came off duty on the watch tower and joined the others. "We can't do no circus act in that motorboat, 'cause there ain't enough dry beach for them department folks to come over and stand on."

"Us fellers are hoodoed, that's what we are!" Little Welch, his particular chum, chimed in disgustedly. "We're about the on'y ones that haven't done anything toward helping along the fair, and now we won't even get the chance to talk to our member about that Congress 'propriation. Call it the Life Savers' Home, huh! Live Savers' poorhouse, more like!"

Welsh Had Shown Him the Way.

To the outburst of the little life saver the solemn faced circle nodded assent. In ordinary circumstances Ships Bottom was a happy station; which means that every man knew he could depend on the others to do their duty, and the team worked with a certainty of results that made the crew glad to slap the nose of the big forty horsepower motor lifeboat and say with pride, "That's us!"

But the untimely coming of the equinoctial storm soured the station's temper by upsetting their plans for the day. The motorboat drill was the only practical contribution they could make toward the building of the long projected home, which was designed to be to the life savers and longshoremen of Barnegat what Sailors' Snug Harbor is to derelict Captains of the sea, a safe refuge against the time of age and disability. For, by some grim irony of Government, these men who gladly risked their lives for the lives and property of strangers had no pension to look forward to, and their scanty earnings melted promptly at the hail of distress.

And now the storm that chained them to the station and shut them off from playing their part in the village festivities had forestalled the coming of visitors from the mainland, including the member of Congress and department officials, to witness the work of the new motorboat, a recent acquisition of the station. And, what was still worse to the unsophisticated minds of the big boatmen, they would have no opportunity to advance convincing arguments to the "Wash'nt'n folks" why Congress should help along the good work of building the home.

Ships Bottom would get visitors from only one side in that welter, as Big Jem Casco the keeper remarked—and God forbid that!

THE wailing of the wind, the wash of the tide water outside, brought a look of anxious expectancy to the weather beaten face of Captain Casco, and the crew exchanged glances when the lookout above called down, reporting the smoke of a steamer at sea.

"I've been watching her, and she stays in the same place, seems to me," the man said. "She's hove to in the smother, mebby, or nosing round the shoals. Anyhow, she's a good five mile out."

The keeper knocked the ashes from his pipe and unbarred the station door. From where the men sat they could see the "smoke" of the sea flying across the tide-water which was slowly covering the whole extent of the beach, leaving only a thin backbone of sand dunes high up as sole evidence that a beach existed.

A pistol shot from the station, a torrent of white swirling water rolled through the inlet, piling up surf on each side of the channel through which the ocean river poured like a millrace! For Ships Bottom, located on the worst wrecking stretch of the whole Atlantic Coast, barring Hatteras alone, is right at the mouth of Barnegat Inlet, which makes a funnel for the sea when the east wind drives inshore, filling the channel and flooding the beach flush up to the sills of the boathouse.

"There'll be no beach patrolling to-day, boys," the keeper said, as he closed the door and moved toward the tower ladder. "The whole Atlantic's washing in, and no telling what it'll fetch with it. If we get a call, we just got to take the boat through the beach water; we'd never make headway against the inlet. That current would drag in a battleship and choke her offhand."

"I ain't wishin' no harm to anybody," Little Welsh said, still nursing his grievance; "on'y if anything has got to come in they may as well make it a Spanish galleon with a million aboard. They's lots o' big money ships blows up from South Ameriky. Why, I read how Nicaraguy was sending up a million or two back rent or something. If we could resky one of them kind, mebby Congress would pony up that appropriation. The hoodoo can't hang on for always, that's certain."

Little Welsh's disappointment over the failure of the boat drill was keener than that of the others; for he and his long chum Johnson it was who had cooked up the brilliant scheme of securing Government aid for the Life Savers' Home. That idea had met with enthusiastic approval; but the possibility of a treasure ship trusting herself off Barnegat when the east gale was beating in with the sound of great drums was a fantasy that only provoked a grin from his mates.

BUT a sudden warning cry from Casco as he dropped among them brought the idlers to their feet.

"I ain't sure, boys, but by the looks that smoke wagon out there is in trouble, and we got the only boat that'll reach her." The big keeper made a stride to the telephone. Before he reached it, the bell clattered thrice in quick succession. "I thought it! General alarm from the Hook! Get ready, boys!"

As the Captain of Ships Bottom snatched the trumpet the men swarmed in from the adjoining boathouse, where the big white motor stood perched on her sand wagon. Silently, without confusion, they scattered to lockers, belting up their sea boots and pulling on oilskins.

"Wireless—the Steamship Brignola lost her screw and is sinking due East Barnegat—Yes—Crew taking to boats—Reach her by motor and—Stand by!" Leaping across the department wire from Sandy Hook to the cape came the call of duty, electrifying every life saving station simultaneously, over fifty miles of wrecking coast.

Far out on the gale the ill starred Brignola, out of control and helpless, with her screw propeller torn off and a drag over the bow, was sinking and calling for help. Almost as the wireless cry came in from headquarters at Sandy Hook, Captain Casco read it out in Barnegat station. Barnegat of all the Jersey coast had the one boat to do the work required. And Barnegat was to "Stand by." It was an unusual order when there were lives to save; but Ships Bottom did not stop to ask why.

The crew were already swarming over the big white motorboat, grimly chaffing as they worked.

"Brignola—huh! Sounds dago. Must be Welshy's galleon. That's why they want us to stand by her till the revenues come. Most like the skipper just wants salvage tugs to tow him off shore. Them tramp steamers think we're wild Indians on this coast."

Little Welsh said nothing. The United States Life Saving Department was not giving orders to Barnegat to stand by a South American tramp unless there was good reason for it, not in a gale like this one and the ship miles off shore and fighting desperately to hold every inch of sea room.

The big wind was booming in now with a weight behind it that flattened the ocean in vast sheets, or scooped the water up bodily, throwing it high over the narrow sand strip into the bay. It took all the strength of the crew to hold the big motor on her wagon as they spun her out of the boathouse into the send of the surf.

A giant roller swept under the bow, the sand wagon fell apart, the crew clambered over the sides, and the big storm fighter shot out into the seas, her powerful screws churning foam like the tail of an angry shark. Even then it took all her great power to keep out of the drag of the tide water that roared through the inlet like a river in torrent. "If that fool Brignola ever gets caught in that streak o' water, she'll wash over Barnegat village without touchin' the roofs!" So they told one another.

FAR ahead, through the white waste of waters on the horizon, loomed the black smudge that was the doomed steamship Brignola. Before her black funnel

and spars were painted plainly against the dun storm clouds, the lifeboat forged alongside of an ominous object washing inshore, a capsized ship's boat. To the lifesavers the picture of disaster and insubordination was plain.

"Crew quit the officers," Casco said. "Skipper's hanging onto her out there."

"That explains it, the wireless and the way she acted, —mutiny aboard," Johnson agreed, and the others gloomily nodded. There was menace as well as mystery in the wind.

The motorboat dashed onward; for there was nothing for her to do there. A mile away the Brignola lay, low down in the stern, with her high black bows buckling the seas, dragging on a hawser that led to a sea anchor of lashed spars; a makeshift that alone prevented her being blown bodily ashore, for the fore and aft sails hung in tatters from her two stumpy masts. A murmur of commiseration went up from the boat as the life savers scanned her sea washed decks with anxious eyes.

"There's another boat under her lee! She's hanging to her davit tackle!" Welsh cried. "And the skipper's on the bridge! There's something on that galleon ship, you see!"

Suddenly the little life saver straightened up, gripping Johnson by the shoulder as he balanced to the swaying of the motor. For a moment he stared and glanced back over the boat at the stolid faces, set with stern resolution of duty to be done. "D'ye see it, Johnny?" he said in an awed whisper. "It blowed out o' the mizzen when she swooped. Now it's wropped up again. My Gawd! It's a dynamite flag she's flyin'!"

Out of the smother and spume that enveloped the black steamship like a shroud, the thing bent on the lower shrouds flapped out in all its grisly red. Every man in the boat saw it now; but beyond a grunt or a half reckless laugh they gave no sign.

"She's carryin' guncotton fer Panama—that's the kind o' galleon she is!" Welsh said with a groan. "Red ensign for dynamite—it's all in the game o' checkers. On'y the Life Savers' Home don't get a man in the king row this trip!"

It was plain enough now to Ships Bottom crew why the revenue department, which looks after the safety of the seaboard, had sent rush orders to Barnegat to stand by the derelict. A dynamite ship traversing the sea lanes is dangerous enough; but the helpless Brignola, straining at a bundle of spars, her machinery useless, and her few sails in tatters, threatening every moment to storm in upon the coast like a runaway torpedo, was a terror of the sea that called for watchful handling by cool and resourceful men.

"We'll transship the bunch and lay by for the revenues to come up and bombard her," Casco said, issuing orders as though at boat drill. "Stand by with the boathook, Welshy!" The lifeboat, breasting the sea, swung under the ship's stern.

Little Welsh was already in the bow, scowling up at the black sided ship that had come to make a mockery of his hopes. The dynamite ship was the last straw to a day of disappointments. Apparently the hoodoo of Ships Bottom was still in perfectly good working order, and in his own mind the little boatman consigned the Brignola to a much more sultry region than the storm swept offing of Barnegat.

"It's the limit! They can't nothing worse happen, unless— By George! she's going down!" A tremendous blast heeled the ship with a rending and cracking of timbers. A sharp report sounded over the gale.

"She's broke her mooring! Cast loose and get clear!" Casco yelled to the sailors in the boat. "We'll pick you up."

The warning came too late. The big hull lurched back, squatting like a setter dog. The gale caught her high flung bow, and she spun round on her heel, dragging the boatload of sailors with her into the maelstrom of destruction.

THE suddenness of the calamity, which appalled even the hardy life savers, brought a cry of rage from Little Welsh. "That crazy skipper done it! He wasn't satisfied wreckin' the bloomin' galleon, now he's cut her loose to blow up the whole coast!"

"We can't stand by her now! God help Ships Bottom and Barnegat!"

The cry fired the little life saver's blood, as the flickering of his hopes for salvage and sudden wealth made him reckless of consequences. He heard Casco roar something about chasing the ship, as the motor headed for the swamped boat; but he had already formed his own plan. It matured with appalling suddenness.

The swing of the ship down wind brought the Brignola close, too close for the safety of any other boat than the big unsinkable motor. As the ship forged past, the tackle swinging from her davits swept over the motor's bow. Welsh leaped, grasped the dangling ropes, and swarmed like a monkey up the ship's side. "Chase be hanged! I'll ride the old hooker in!" he shouted in defiant farewell.

Johnson, who was beside him in the bow of the boat, was just as prompt. Welsh had shown him the way, and the second boat tackle was in reach. Before Welsh scrambled up from the Brignola's deck, Johnson's head and shoulders came up over the bulwark.

"I see you try to swipe her all by your lonesome!" he said.

"You long leg' su'cide!" Welsh gasped.

Both men knew that they had signed their death warrant; for they knew what lay before them and what they had to do. It was dangerous enough to stand by a dynamite laden ship in a seaway; but the derelict Brignola, bowled inshore on that monstrous wind which almost lifted them bodily from the deck, had become a huge bomb aimed at Barnegat station, the lighthouse, and all that stood in the path of the ocean river that poured out of the sea like a miniature Gulf Stream through Barnegat Inlet.

"If she sticks in the cut she'll blow up the station, an' if she goes through she'll boost Barnegat higher'n Gilroy's kite!" Johnson summed it up as they worked. "We got to copper that game!"

Two men alone could never fetch the ship into the wind again, or retard her progress toward the inlet; but if they could not stop her they could at least direct the course of destruction. The head sails still left hanging not only gave her steerageway, but soon left the lifeboat dangling far astern. Welsh pronounced sentence on both.

"We got to run her in close. She'll be travelin' like the Limited before she hits the inlet; then, last minute, we'll sheer her off—before we're helped off, Johnny," he added.

"Sure!" said Long Johnson.

On the ship's shrouds the red flag flapped out its warning of disaster coming. On her last cruise the derelict Brignola had the right of way, and she traversed it with fearful rapidity for the two team mates.

When Welsh fought his way to the wheel, over a deck swept clear of every movable thing, Johnson was before him, working with all his mighty strength to steer the ship off the beeline she was making for the inlet.

"She steers like a ferryboat and drags like a dredge," the big man gasped. "She's sure hummin', though! She'll pile up like a church and fall down like the steeple when she hits the beach."

Right over the bow the ocean current lay down in a broad white splash to the point where the sea funneled through the inlet. That irresistible tide rush was a deadly magnet, making Ships Bottom beach a terror to mariners when the east wind blew. Inshore, the surf flung away north and south, forming a huge cross.

The grimly significant setting of the scene was lost on Welsh and Johnson. They were not bothering about eventualities beyond what lay directly before them—and what followed in their wake.

It was the latter that brought a growl of resentment from Little Welsh. "Cap's chasin' us up, confound him!" he said. "She's picked up her people, an' she's coming along with a bone in her teeth."

The "preacher" glanced backward at the motorboat laboring far astern in the tossing waters and nodded, stolid faced. "If he tries for us, heave a block at him, Welshy!" he said calmly,—two lives were enough to sacrifice, even with the peril to life and property ahead. Two were a ship's company with such business as they had at hand.

There was only one thing for them to do. They had already planned their course of action, and the whole of Ships Bottom could do no more. Ordinarily, no deep draft ship could negotiate Barnegat Inlet; but to-day the big wind had changed conditions. The racing tide, propelled by its dynamic force, had flooded the whole beach, and the Brignola might wash through the cut. Welsh and Johnson were taking no chances on letting a dynamite ship, helpless as this one was, without propeller or sails to work her, run amuck in the narrow waters of Barnegat Bay, with that gale blowing, perhaps to smash into the village—with what disastrous aftermath to the imminent explosion they well knew.

They could stop her course only by the terrible alternative of swerving her from that seething caldron that was the inlet toward which she was headed and running her on the sea beach outside, and this they decided, without thought of their own certain finish. Ships Bottom had been ordered to stand by, and Ships Bottom obeyed orders, regardless of consequences.

Casting from time to time a wary eye at the pursuing motorboat, they worked the laboring hulk little by little out of the deadly current that was drawing her to the inlet. They gave a cry of satisfaction when the tall form of Barnegat Lighthouse flitted past in the smother on the port side almost as if it and not the runaway Brignola was moving. A fishing schooner, snuggling up behind the light, saw the terror coming, turned tail, and fled like a cackling hen.

"'Ware hawk!" Johnson chuckled.

"She's nosed 'em all out at the first milepost!" Welsh said recklessly. "She's in the stretch now, Johnny, colors flyin'!"

It required no common courage to stand at the wheel of a derelict ship such as the Brignola was, not drifting, but driving her on to certain destruction, with a cargo of annihilation 'tween decks, as Welsh and Johnson well knew. The thunder of the surf came to them. They could see it threshing over the high rib of sand at the right of the inlet. And the big wind, which had come to make a record for the Jersey seaboard, screamed and boomed its warning of doom.

Welsh and Johnson (who were also destined to go on the department records, with comments) were more concerned with the precise spot where they should pile her up, and it was only in that connection that they thought of eventualities.

NOW that the greatest peril was past and the destined end was no longer in doubt, Little Welsh glanced at his big team mate with a feeling of guilt growing in his heart. In obeying the crazy headed impulse to ride in the dynamite ship he had not only doomed himself,—he did not mind that,—but he had dragged big Johnson into trouble as well. He was sending him to his death. And such a death!

"I might a known the big idjit would have followed me. And all we git out of it is a obituary notice. That's what you get for cooking up loony notions about gold galleons and things!" he growled to himself. "Bustin' up dynamite ships ain't going to help the Life Savers' Home none; not unless they give 'em a pension to remember us by. Fat chance o' that! What I got to do is to get Johnny off afore it's too late—and that'll be mighty quick!"

Long Johnson's thoughts were pretty much of the same order; but Johnson, who was preacher of the crew at Ships Bottom, always became laconic when on duty. "I got to git Tom off this hooker!" he said.

The big wind had been busy with the steamship Brignola before Welsh and Johnson took command. Besides wrecking her machinery, it had torn off the doors and smashed in the sides of the pilothouse where the two friends stood. Their glances met over the straining wheel.

"What I been thinking," Welsh said, "they ain't no sense in us riding her 'way in, Johnny."

"Right you are, Tommy," Long Johnson returned promptly. "I'll hold her to it, till just afore she hits, and you kin duck over the side. Cap'll pick you up back there."

They could see the lifeboat struggling in the wake of the Brignola, coming up hand over fist. They saw the big Captain of Ships Bottom standing on the thwarts of the pitching boat frantically waving at them.

"Huh! Cap acts like he thought we didn't know what we got aboard," Welsh commented. "W'at's he wigwaggin' at the inlet for?"

"I s'pose that's where he thinks we'll come down," Johnson said thoughtfully. "'Tain't fair to keep him chasin' us this way, Welshy. Ships Bottom can't afford to lose that boat."

"If we duck, we duck together! Cap can pick up two just as well as one," Little Welsh snapped. "You go port side an' I'll go sta'board. This hooker's goin' to make a awful mess, Johnny!" Welsh added impressively.

"I reckon she is, Tommy, along of what she's got aboard. That's why we can't take no chances of her sliding back and making for the inlet; we can't afford no missfire when we get off."

With an eye to deception, the big man arranged a coil of lashing conveniently at hand. "We'll tie her down

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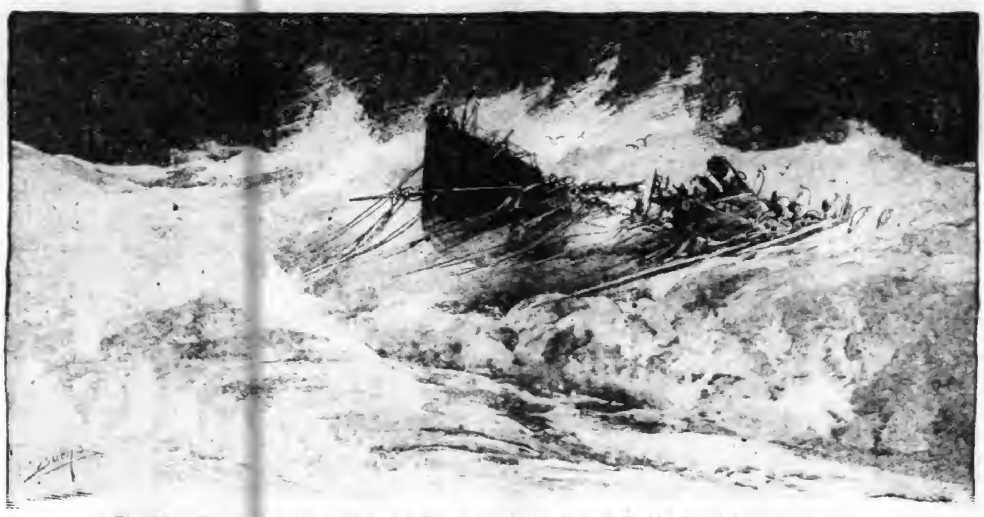

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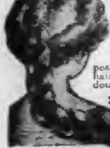

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fallen man and knelt beside him. She raised his head and cradled it against her breast. She wiped his face with her lace handkerchief, and when his eyes opened she gave a soft cry of love and tenderness.

"'Will he live?' she whispered.

"'Yes, yes,' answered Blackmore. 'He's only stunned. Come, Vera, come! His man will attend to him. Come! I've won you. Come!'

"She turned her face toward him. Her eyes were blazing with hatred and fear. 'You brute!' she cried. 'You might have killed him! Go, you brute, and leave me with the man I love!'"

Fletcher stopped abruptly and drained his glass.

"But did he go? He had won her!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, he went. What else could he do? You can fight a man; but you can't fight the eternal woman," he answered with a smile.

DR. EDWARDES leaned across the table, pointing an accusing finger at him. "You, sir, are the man who won that woman!" he said.

Fletcher bowed. "That depends," he replied enigmatically, "upon just what you understand by 'winning' a woman."

The Shipwreckers

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and let her run when she scoots past Giants Finger. That's far as Cap'll dare come."

The lifeboat had already sheered off, making for the inlet, as though fleeing from the imminent eruption; but neither Welsh nor Johnson saw her. Their eyes were glued on what was ahead, a black ridge of rock beyond which the big rollers flung inshore like green capped hills in a leeway. Beyond the rolling surf a backbone of sand rose out of the spray like the peak of a roof.

The wallowing ship bowled past the rocks so close that they could have tossed a biscuit on them. Johnson took a quick turn of the lashing on the wheel and sprang back.

"Now, Tommy!" he roared.

A GIANT roller lifted her high. She swooped down, and they staggered, gasping for breath as the keel ground horribly on the bottom sand. The ship, shuddering like a thing in terror, gathered herself for the final spring. With a parting shout they leaped out of the wheelhouse from opposite sides, clawing out on the wings of the bridge. One of them at least the lifeboat would pick up. The other—

Johnson turned to look back, and Welsh, with a final wave of the hand, ducked out of sight. Grinning broadly, the big life saver scrambled back into the wheelhouse, just as Welsh sprang in the other door.

"'You long idjit! Puttin' up a job on me, was you?" Welsh yelled. "Thinkin' you'd lemme get picked up while you was standin' by—"

Johnson gave a roar. "This time you'll go over!"

Welsh dodged, grabbing up a piece of timber. "Git off, or I'll knock you off!" he shouted. "You big Jack in the Box!"

Under them the ship rose again. The Brignola, bent on suicide, was not waiting the outcome of the fraternal duel. High on the sand she struck with a hideous grinding of broken timbers. Her sharp bow plowed through the backbone of the beach until she hung a third of her length over the bay on the other side. Masts and funnel went over the side as she stopped in full career, her broken hull balanced on the sand ridge like a mighty seesaw.

WELSH and Johnson gathered themselves up, stunned and dazed by the appalling catastrophe of their own making. They were accustomed to gather their wits quickly; but for a moment they gazed in stupefaction, sitting on the floor of the wheelhouse.

"She didn't blow up," Johnson said, as one who imparts interesting information and is a trifle aggrieved. "Dynamite must a got wet."

Welsh's gaze wandered forward where the crimson banner of the dynamite ship trailed like a big splash of gore among the wreckage. "If she didn't go galley west with that bang, she won't go up rockin' to sleep here." The after part of the ship rose and fell on the rollers with rhythmical motion. "I ain't braggin', Johnny, on'y 'tain't everybody kin ride in a dynamite ship and bust her to smithereens on the beach without blowin' her up." Little Welsh added, and glanced pridefully over the wrecked ship.

Through the yawning seams of the deck they could see barrels and boxes bulging from the hold, amid cracking planks and timbers. Under the enormous strain amidships the Brignola creaked and groaned like a thing in pain.

"Mebbe we better get off?" Johnson suggested. "They ain't no use stumping her."

Welsh agreed promptly. It was only a question whether to take to the surf or wait for the lifeboat or breeches buoy.

"That's what Cap meant to do an' what he meant wigwaggin' us 'bout the inlet," Little Welsh said. "Fetch the breeches buoy. We'll make it the sand, Johnny."

HALF blinded by the sea spray, they stumbled to their feet. Before they could make their way over the wreckage forward a cry came from the sand. Instead of the circling lifeline from Ships Bottom gun crew, the huge form of Captain Casco clambered over the bow—Casco gruff of speech and plainly "boiling."

"If you fellows are through wrecking innocent ships that never done you no harm, mebby you better climb down an' go home—you won't get your feet wet," Casco said sarcastically.

Following him came the Ships Bottom bullies, grinning broadly as they saw the team mates perched among the wreckage, petrified with astonishment.

"Innocent blazes! Ain't she a dynamite boat?" Welsh demanded indignantly.

"You bloomin' idjits!" Casco snapped wrathfully. "Didn't I wigwag you to take the inlet? Now you gone and spilled her all over the beach just 'cause a crazy galoot h'ists a fool flag!"

"Fool flag!" Welsh gasped. His face went white with rage. Little by little the truth dawned on him as Casco spoke. A half crazed skipper, in fear of the wrecking coast and carrying a valuable cargo, in a moment of terror had taken this means of calling for help from any source, Government or other.

"You lived all your life on Barnegat and didn't know them fellers will pretend they got yellow fever or anything to scare off the beach combers!" Casco said reproachfully. "What you two fellers needs is a wet nurse."

For a long minute Welsh and Johnson stood regarding each other while Casco rumbled on.

"You fellers done it good and plenty. That skipper told me he had bullion from Mexico for the mint. Nacherly he was scared. Even the Gov'ment wasn't taking chances on losing that charter load. That's why we got orders to stand by, so's they could salvage her. We wasn't havin' enough tough luck over the home, but you heroes had to shin up them davits right into a shipload of trouble with Mexico and the U. S. You bet we won't get that home appropriation now!"

Little Welsh exploded with a roar. "So that skipper made me an' Johnny shipwreckers, did he? Johnny, wouldn't that crack a hardshell clam? And we thinkin' we was heroes, and sacrificing ourselves for the public good! An' thinkin' the Gov'ment 'ud give the home a pension to remember us by after we was blowed to bits! You heard all that, Johnny?" he said with icy calm. "And we goin' to bat one 'nother over the head, who'd jump in the drink!"

Long John had listened in silence. The "preacher," on duty, was a man of few words. Now, balancing on the rocking hulk, he flexed his mighty arm. "Where is he?" he asked.

BUT Casco was wrong. The Fates had ordained differently, as they generally do.

Even Long Johnson was partially consoled, when the Brignola's nervous skipper, to save his own bacon for violating maritime ethics by terrorizing the coast, rendered glowing accounts of Ships Bottom and the team mates' heroism. Mexico, as a great sister Republic, could do no less than show her appreciation, which came in the form of an order on La Banca del Republique, addressed to the Life Savers' Home of Barnegat, and inscribed with delicate Latin humor, "For wrecking the S. S. Brignola."

But it required all the large amount of that order for Little Welsh to endure Ships Bottom's scoffing gibes with equanimity.

"Ship wreckers and gold galleons, huh!" he retorted truculently. "She was a gold galleon, wasn't she? As for shipwreckin', it's a lot easier to salvage bullion off a sandstrip than deep sea diving. Anyway, that's what Mexico thinks, an' if we ain't worked that 'propriation through, we got the coin 'good an' plenty' for that home. So what's the use of talkin'? You fellers is just jealous 'cause Johnny an' me busted that hoodoo. It took a dynamite ship to do it; but we done it by our lonesomes!"

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